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"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

SEP 23 1949

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

VOLUME XXXVIII 1949 NUMBER 3

FALL ISSUE

JULY-AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

THE TEST OF FAITH

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE
420 BEACON STREET, BOSTON 15, MASSACHUSETTS

THE ANANDA ASHRAMA
BOX 577, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

SINGLE COPIES 75c $3.00 A YEAR

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COMING EVENTS

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Gayatri Devi in charge
Class: Tues. 8 P.M.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, La Crescenta, California
Services: Sun. 11 A.M. and 3:15 P.M.
Sister Daya in charge
Class: Thurs. 8. P.M.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with regret we announce the change in price of the subscription of THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST. Due to the increasing cost of publication, it has become imperative. Beginning with this issue, the yearly subscription will be $3.00 and single copies 75c. Those who have already sent in their subscription for 1949, kindly mail the balance to The Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon Street, Boston 15, Massachusetts, or to the Ananda Ashrama, Box 577, LaCrescenta, California.

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New York City: Brentano. 586 Fifth Ave.; Baker & Taylor Co., 55 Fifth Ave.; Samuel Weiser, 117 Fourth Ave.

Entered as second class matter, March 26th, 1930, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under act of March 3rd, 1878. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 17, 1921.

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOL. XXXVIII 1949 NUMBER 3

SONNET TO NIGHT

By Joseph Blanco White

(1775-1841)

Mysterious night! when our first parent knew
Thee by report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this goodly frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?

But through a curtain of translucent hue,
Bathed in the hues of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the Host of Heaven came,
And lo! creation broadened to man's view.

Who could have guessed such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who divined
Whilst bud, and flower, and insect stood revealed,
Thou to such countless worlds hadst made us blind?

Why should we, then, shun death with anxious strife?
If Light conceals so much, wherefore not Life?

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

He whose heart is steadfastly engaged in Yoga, looks everywhere with the eyes of equality, seeing the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. He who sees Me in all and all in Me, from him I vanish not, nor does he vanish from Me. —*Bhagavad-Gita*

My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race-hatred here. . . . I do want to think in terms of the whole world. . . . My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. . . . Isolated independence is not the goal of the world States; it is voluntary interdependence. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States, warring one against another, but a federation of friendly interdependent States. —*Mahatma Gandhi*

When the duration of a man's life or of a people's life appears to us as microscopic as that of a fly, and inversely the life of a gnat as infinite as that of a celestial body, with all its dust of nations, we feel ourselves at once very small and very great; and we are able, as it were, to survey from the heights of the spheres our own existence and the little whirlwinds which agitate our little Europe.

—*Henri Frederic Amiel*

All men that God created can live on the earth. God gave space and air enough for all if men would only give good will. —*Nicholai Velimirovic*

The part can never be well unless the whole is well.

—*Plato*

Humanity does not consist in day-dreaming about the whole of mankind, but in always acting humanely.

—*Thomas Masaryk*

THE TEST OF FAITH

By Swami Paramananda

(An Address delivered at the Ananda Ashrama, California, on Mar. 13, 1938.)

Let us lift our thoughts and prayers to the Supreme Being of the universe, according to our inner convictions.

Let us offer unto Him those supplications that spring from our inmost depths, that they may be true, sincere and child-like.

May we be free from all elements of calculation, free of misgiving, and direct in our approach to Him.

May that Infinite One—Mother and Father of us all—bestow upon us His unfailing protection and keep us ever in peace.

Peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings.

This pronouncement of peace is in itself a challenge to the spirit of the age and a vindication of the efforts made by those who believe that in the depths of his spirit man is born for peace. If he has not been able to transcend the other elements in himself, and in the world, that lead away from peace, it is because his spiritual vision has not penetrated to the root of his being.

At the outset of the last horrible war in Europe, in 1914, I learned that ethical, theological and intellectual concepts, even when fortified by a scientific background, avail nothing, unless their roots go deeper than mere words and theories.

"Oh the burden of a doubtful mind!" exclaimed a mystic, and anyone who has ever experienced it knows what a terrible weight it throws upon one. Man can cultivate the element of doubt as readily as the element of faith, and today it seems we cultivate it the more readily. The reason is easily discovered; it lies in the trend of our modern thought.

We believe tremendously in mechanism. Yet, in Europe, when the war came, the mechanism which man had created and by which his whole life was adjusted, practically stopped. In other words, man's mechanical achievements can fail him in spite of his dependence upon them. But that is not true when it comes to our dependence on a Greater Power. He who turns away from the higher aspects of existence should pause and consider this.

A short time ago I was invited to speak before a Peace Conference. You know how difficult it is to speak of peace when there is anything but peace in the world. Often we hesitate to say what we really believe for fear people may make fun of it or misunderstand. But I spoke simply and directly, as is my custom. I told them how at the outset of the last war I was in Europe, almost in the midst of the armies. The train on which I was trying to get to Paris from Switzerland was side-tracked, sometimes for hours, so that the trains carrying the wounded could go through. Naturally I could get no word to Boston, and everyone at the Centre was worried. One gentleman, a devoted member, said: "I suppose our dear Swami over there is still saying 'Peace, peace, peace.' " I felt it was a great tribute. I was saying "Peace" and I hope I can always say it. For peace is an eternal principle. We can dream of it even when we do not know what lies ahead of us. In this lies the real test of our faith.

Until a man's faith is indelibly written on his heart, it will not be reflected on his countenance and he can make no impression upon other hearts. This is certainly true when it comes to our work for peace. We have found that written documents accomplish very little. Diplomats know that, so that they never trust anyone and no one trusts them. A man may think he is so clever that he can inspire

faith in others, in spite of the lack of trust in his own soul. But there is a moral force greater than man's cunning. If we do not believe in it we shall have to learn through hard lessons that, as Sri Ramakrishna says, "A man's mind and mouth must become one."

It does not pay to doubt. Doubt breaks down our moral fibre. We may not be aware of it, but it does so none the less. It is an insidious thing. Faith, on the other hand, builds up our morale. It is a positive force.

Let me share with you something from Emerson which I came across this morning: "The heart that abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all Its works and will travel a royal road to particular knowledge and power."

I like especially to quote this, because it is from a modern source, and also because it is so very practical. "Have faith in God!" Christ told us, and the Buddha declared: "The heart of love and faith spreads, as it were, a beneficent shade from the world of God to the world of man."

Love and faith — the inseparable twins! We cannot live without faith and we cannot have faith without love. They spread their beneficent shelter above us, like the shade of a tree in a tropical land. Faith relates us not only with the things around us which we can feel and touch and see, but with the things that are not obvious to our senses—the indefinable things.

How wisely it has been said in the Bhagavad-Gita: "Man consists of his faith; he is verily what his faith is." Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to teach that faith is the most marvelous thing a man can have. "He that believeth like a child receiveth the grace of God. The calculating intelligence of the world weigheth things with the eye of worldly loss and gain. Man's limited reason seeth not far enough."

We are barricaded behind our self-imposed limitations.

"I have studied; I have read; I am a scientist!" exclaims modern man; "I do not believe in the things you speak about. I follow my mind and my senses and they do not go that far." Is it by those whose vision is limited, who have not gone far enough, is it by these men who themselves are bewildered that we allow ourselves to be guided? It would be better to cling to the unpolished thoughts and words of a true mystic, that come from deep within, than to the clever words of surface culture and diplomacy which fill the world with their empty sound and leave us at the end without anything whatever to sustain us.

Is there a single religion in the world that does not call God infinite, omnipotent, all-merciful? Why then do we think that He is not capable of giving us what we need and want? He is capable. It is we who are incapable of receiving it. We measure with a limited container. We feel that because a man cannot accomplish beyond a certain point, the power of God must be equally circumscribed. That is our greatest difficulty. Our lack of faith brings on our emergencies and then, in desperation, we do terrible things.

Fear is the greatest danger. If we keep on fearing, it will bring to us the thing that we fear. The mind is potent. It can work both ways. It can be constructive and helpful or it can be destructive and detrimental. Let us, therefore, not live without faith. Can we dismiss all hope for the future? Of course we cannot, because we have the living Spirit within.

Faith, however, does not mean merely believing in God; it means far more than that. It means, in addition, faith in ourselves and faith in the divinity of man. It is like a divine triangle. You may say: "I believe in God, but not in anything else." But this is God's universe. Great mystics and saints, in spite of chaotic elements around them, stood

up and said: "I see Him everywhere! The whole world is full of God!" Do you think they were lying? Deluded? Naturally they were using a vision that sees deeper than the surface; but we all potentially have the same vision.

Today you all want to protect your homes, your children, your friends and loved ones. You are anxious; you worry because you do not know where to find that protection. Ever since the close of the war, people have sought to organize peace movements. But peace cannot be maintained by enforcement of law, so long as men have the will and desire to break the law. Written documents, although they have their value, cannot bind men to the principles of peace. If we could make peace merely by signing agreements, the whole world would be full of peace today. It is the heart of man that must be reconstructed. The heart of man is the supreme factor, because when the vision of man's heart is broken, his whole world likewise is broken; it literally goes to pieces.

As a student of psychology, I have seen how a man, apparently perfectly strong, well, happy and prosperous, can wither and be brought to the verge of a nervous breakdown merely through hurt feelings, leading to thoughts of bitterness, anger and malice. Nations can be affected in the same way. That is why I do not believe that the League of Nations or any organization alone can accomplish world peace. The individual must be inspired until the thought of peace becomes like his heart-beat. Do you know what that means? It means that your whole constitution must become saturated with these principles and pulsate with them as with the beat of your heart.

The consciousness of the world will have to be revised, and we should begin by revising the basic training of children. Instead of giving them toy soldiers and guns to play

with, we should give them something elevating and constructive. The so-called civilized nations have been very guilty in this respect. We even sometimes give children real guns, trusting that they will not explode. But we discover too late that accidents do happen. Nations discover the same thing. They have evolved effective means for modern warfare, marvelous in their efficiency, but often they blow to pieces the men who have invented them. Bombs have no consciousness as to who is their friend and their foe. They do not use any discrimination. Therefore the brute force that we cultivate, thinking it is the only means for coping with our enemies, is not the remedy for our ills.

I like to quote thoughts from the back pages of history, thoughts that have been discarded so far as the outer life of the world is concerned. There is the saying of Christ, for instance: "Blessed are the peace-makers . . . !" What would he say of the war-makers, I wonder? Similarly Lord Buddha who lived five hundred years before Christ, evolved a very beautiful, idealistic, yet practical slogan: "Hatred," he said, "can never be conquered by hatred at any time; hatred is conquered by love." The world has tried to twist and turn this truth and say that it cannot work today, but it still stands.

At the time of the war, I was occasionally called upon to take part in big assemblies where I heard even Christians deny that Christ's teachings can now be put into practice. You may remember the famous answer that was once made to a man who rose at a meeting and stated that Christianity had failed. "How can it have failed," came the reply, "when it has never yet been tried?" I am going to say the same thing.

We are feeling discouraged; we complain that we have formed many organizations, and yet we have not succeeded

in bringing about permanent peace. Perhaps we have not tried in the right way. If we ourselves are not at peace with ourselves, how can we bring peace to others?

The most effective way really to extend peace to human hearts is, as I have said, by each individual heart becoming imbued with it. In this way, quite involuntarily and unconsciously, we may become avenues for the accomplishment of great things.

Therefore go forward with faith. There is nothing to be afraid of. Carry peace with you wherever you go and you will see how unfailingly it will shed its influence. There are, of course, certain things which you will have to discard. One of the world's great men once said: "There are five great enemies to peace that inhabit us: avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride. If these enemies were to be banished we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace." Peace is a moral virtue; it is a practical virtue; it is a virtue of the Soul.

I have traveled widely, and in recent years in my travels I have been in China and have passed through Japan. I even had occasion to speak at Hong Kong, a most interesting, cosmopolitan center. In these places I have met people representative of many lands, met them not nationally or politically, but as human beings, and I did not find one single person who did not desire peace. How strange it is, then, that we are downhearted and find peace ever farther and farther away. It reminds me of what Mark Twain said concerning the weather: that every one talked about it but no one did anything about it.

If we really mean, honestly and sincerely, that we desire peace above all things, should we not try to do our part? Let us make a resolution today, right now, that at least we are not going to be responsible for sending forth

any kind of alien thought. Do you know what that means? Alien thought is any thought that does not blend with your ideal, with your highest consciousness. It means that you are going to banish the thoughts of envy, hatred, bitterness which seek to take possession of your mind. At first they may be only little thoughts, but as we entertain them, they become powerful and begin to sway people, and then, perhaps, even nations.

War begins with the individual, and today we are fearful because we see rising to take command a type of individual who is full of ambition, self-interest, and self-importance. Yet even this type might be converted. I do not mean converted to some religious creed, but to a high and universal Principle. The same force that impels them now to destructive action is capable of transforming them, once it is turned the right way. Through it they could become really victorious.

Gandhi is a great example for humanity to follow—a little man whose life, politically, socially and spiritually is completely dedicated to peace. When he was confronted with the modern scientific machinery of war, what was his plan of action? Not only did he not waver from his principles, but he told his followers: "Though they swim through your blood, do not you shed the blood of a single human being."

Sometimes people ask me if Gandhi has not lost his battle. That type of battle can never be lost. When the followers of Christ put their Master in a tomb, with a heavy stone at His head, they thought that was the end for Him. But Spirit is more potent than all these things. Unfortunately we have lost our faith in it and that faith we have to revive. Let us remember that when we say "I am nothing; I can do nothing!" then nothing will be the result. But the reverse also is true.

What a great opportunity we have, living in a country such as this, where we are free to stretch out our hands to those less fortunate than we are, no matter where they may live. When I was in Japan, a group of young men came to me. They said: "Won't you please tell us something about India; we are deeply interested in Mahatma Gandhi." But they talked in a whisper.

Some of you may think: Swami Paramananda comes from the land of idealism, therefore he is a visionary person. In the sense that I believe in vision, that may be true. At the outset of my sojourn in America when I used to speak on meditation and prayer and give the Peace Chant, some of the men in the congregation used to be a little bit amused. Occasionally they would come to me after the Service and say "You see we are so active; we have no time for these things." Strangely enough, after the depression started, it was these very same men who came to me to be relieved of their weight of worry.

I feel that I am very fortunate to have seen the ups and downs of life and of human consciousness, and I know that often the things that seem impossible today become possible tomorrow. I am optimistic that in spite of all the hopelessness that we sense around us at the present time, we are actually moving towards a greater era. I have nothing by which I can prove this to you, but it is my conviction and I believe that as more of us feel this way it will help to diminish the clouds of darkness, despondency and despair which now darken men's minds.

Without giving the matter much thought, the average person is apt to remark: "The world is not ready for peace." But who is going to make it ready? If the world is a bad place, a turbulent place, we must not forget that we have had our share in making it so. We live in it; we breathe in

it; we contribute something consciously or unconsciously to it at every moment. Since this is true, we must also have the power to change it. The same force which is now creating war and intolerance, hate, destruction and devastation can be transmuted into a constructive power. Men make wars, but men also establish peace. Remember that. The human heart, when it becomes convinced of its mistakes, will change of its own accord. For that reason, no one can force peace upon us.

If we continue to think in terms of war, hate, suspicion, envy and malice, and—most pernicious of all—ambition, it can lead us to but one end. "Man does not live by bread alone," Christ told us, and He also said: "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" That is the divine challenge and its momentum does not grow less with the passing of the years. Let every man raise himself personally, then when individually we are each able to do this, we shall be able to do it collectively.

Peace! The very word brings a blessing, and my heart reaches out to all who are bent upon attaining it. If there is even a very little I can do towards its realization, I shall do it gladly and humbly.

Do not be discouraged. If every one of you strives to become sane, poised and peaceful it will unfailingly contribute towards world peace by building up a constructive power which must eventually succeed. Being just sentimental about it, however, will not help. When people weep, merely weeping with them does little good; but if we can remove the tears from their eyes by bringing them something fresh, we shall be contributing in a very real and practical way. There are those who are so full of inspiration that their very presence diminishes heartache and misery. That is what I mean.

The most effective weapon we can use to overcome war, hatred, jealousy and misunderstanding, is the mind and the heart which actually realize the ideal that others believe in only theoretically and intellectually. Realization is the way; but we have to cope with what is immediately before us. If we do not know how to make use of today, how do we know that we shall do any better with tomorrow? Nor should we look upon present conditions merely as meaningless and evil. Sometimes the very best in us is brought out through blows and shocks and heart-break. These things also have their great significance.

When everything goes well, we often become insolent and lose our regard for God and man. We say: "I do not need to pray; my own strength is sufficient." This is very dangerous logic. Man needs something other than his own physical and intellectual prowess, and what he is able to gain by means of scheming and contriving. In fact, my suggestion is (and I think the true world-thinker will follow the same line) that we revolutionize our thoughts, that we spiritualize them. This does not mean that we should acquire some religious dogma, but rather that we should seek to awaken the spiritual consciousness within us, which is the heritage of man, so that as man understands his place in the universe, he will at the same time feel his oneness with his brother. India holds and has always held in her bosom the key to this ideal, and from the dawn of her history has sounded the clarion call of peace.

"Let all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!

"In the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!"

Four thousand years ago the ancient Indo-Aryans chanted this *mantram,* so do not think that man can ever destroy these high principles. Do not think that the thoughts, the idealism, of Christ and of Buddha and of the Vedic sages have been discarded because what today we call civilization has turned a deaf ear.

What is civilization? I have only one definition to give: Civilization is that state of human society wherein men, transcending their animal instincts, hate less, desire less, have more self-control. The really civilized man, for instance, will not go after his food as the animals do who bite one another over a bit of meat or a bone. When men become civilized they are self-contained and are able to surmount their lower propensities, thus liberating that higher part of their nature which alone can bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. If today we do not accept this standard or seek to measure up to it, perhaps we had better not use the word "civilized" until we have succeeded in becoming so.

"Epochs of faith are epochs of fruitfulness; but epochs of unbelief, however glittering, are barren of all permanent good." Goethe said this, and how true it is! We are not living in an epoch of faith; but when we have done with glittering things and have found that it does not pay for a man to be without faith in God, we shall realize that life is worth living.

We know so much. But do we know what has brought the shadow of doubt and despair upon the world? We pride ourselves on being agnostics; but what good are agnostics? Let us rather welcome the birth of the mystic, the seer, one who believes in vital things and who can dispel human misery. We need people who are childlike in quality, who believe in God's divine protection, not those who are so hard

that we cannot bear their atmosphere. Let us have our part in that diviner consciousness, and know a faith that holds, no matter how many tests may come.

Be loving. Feel that God directs your forces, then wherever you go you will be safe; you will not be afraid, even in the midst of chaos and danger, because He guides you. But if you go forward with calculation, you will carry danger with you. When you know that He is eternal, that His love is unalterable, no occasion can bring real shadow. That is the great triumph, not only for the individual, but for the whole world. It is the triumph of the Spirit over disbelief and doubt, and may God help us to achieve it!

EQUINOX

By Charlotte Miles

Accept the signs when mists of autumn rise
Around the verdant hill from valleys dim
Below, already drawing to their rim
This airy island, warm in summer guise.

The scales are set in equinoctial test.
What are your offerings? Is it enough to twine
Into the harvest wreath the golden corn, the vine,
Flower and fruit, the garden's loveliest?

Emerging out of dusk in changing sky
Again the starry marksman drawing nigh
Is poised to send the mercy of his dart:
Soon withered leaf and hollow fruit will fall . . .
But hearken — grave and low the vespers call
To claim the mellowed ripeness of the heart.

He who learns to be his true self is one who finds out what is good and holds fast to it. —*Tsesze*

SRI RAMAKRISHNA— AS I UNDERSTAND HIM*

By Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

(A speech delivered by the Honorable Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, on Sunday, the 20th of March, 1949, on the occasion of the 114th Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna, at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi.)

Swamiji and Friends: I am grateful for this invitation to come to this celebration and I am glad to take this opportunity to express my homage to the memory of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

I do not know that I am particularly fitted to speak about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, because he was a man of God and I am a man of earth and engaged in earthly activities which consume all my energy. But even a man of earth can admire and perhaps be influenced by a man of God, and so I have been admiring godly men, though sometimes I do not altogether understand; and though I do not fully understand what they said, I have admired these great men of God, and have been influenced by reading what was written about them by their disciples. These extraordinary personalities have powerfully influenced their generation and the succeeding generations. They have powerfully influenced great men and changed the whole tenor of their lives.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa obviously was completely outside the run of average humanity. He appears to be in the tradition of the great Rishis of India, who have come from time to time to draw our attention to the higher things of life and of the spirit. For India never ignored in the course of her long history, and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life, and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth and has always welcomed the

*From the "Vedanta Kesari," May 1949.

searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality and at the same time she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for the truth in their own way.

Unfortunately, recently, that tradition of tolerance has been rather shaken and we have sometimes fallen in evil ways and have become narrow-minded and thought that we people who walk in a certain narrow path alone are right and others are wrong. That has never been the tradition of India. What made India great was her broad-mindedness. It was her conviction that truth is many-sided and of infinite variety. How can any man presume to say that he only has grasped the entire truth? If he is earnest in the search for truth, he may say that he saw a particular facet of truth; but how can he say that somebody else has not seen truth, unless he follows a similar path? So India encouraged the pursuit of truth, and of moral values, and that was perhaps the most distinctive feature of India's culture. And in spite of the many ups and downs of her history, something of the original impress continues throughout these long ages.

One of the effects of Sri Ramakrishna's life was the peculiar way in which he influenced other people who came in contact with him. Men often scoffed from a distance at this man of no learning, and yet when they came to him, very soon they bowed their heads before this man of God and ceased to scoff and "remained to pray." They gave up, many of them, their ordinary vocations in life and business and joined the band of devotees. They were great men, and one of them, better known than the others, not only in India but in other parts of the world is Swami Vivekananda.

I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda, but

I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him, and I think that it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, and they would learn much from them, that would, perhaps, as some of us did, enable them to catch a glimpse of that fire that raged in Swami Vivekananda's mind and heart and which ultimately consumed him at an early age.

Because there was fire in his heart—the fire of a great personality coming out in eloquent and ennobling language —it was no empty talk that he was indulging in. He was putting his heart and soul into the words he uttered. Therefore he became a great orator, not with the orator's flashes and flourishes, but with a deep conviction and earnestness of spirit. And so he influenced powerfully the minds of many in India, and two or three generations of young men and women have no doubt been influenced by him. Other things have happened in this country, and a very great man came—Gandhiji—who shook up the whole of India, another great man in the old line of Rishis of India.

Much has happened which perhaps makes some forget those who came before and who prepared India and shaped India in those early and difficult days. If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will find is that they are not old. It was told fifty-six years ago, and they are fresh today, because what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems. Therefore they do not become old. They are fresh even though you read them now.

He gave us something which brings us, if I may use the word, a certain pride in our inheritance. He did not spare us. He talked of our weaknesses and our failings too. He

did not wish to hide anything. Indeed he should not, because we have to correct those failings. He deals with those failings also. Sometimes he strikes hard at us, but sometimes points out the great things for which India stood and which even in the days of India's downfall made her, in some measure, continue to be great.

So what Swamiji has written and said is of interest and must interest us and is likely to influence us for a long time to come. He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word, and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India, and a great number of people, who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date, drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly he has powerfully influenced the India of today, and I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of spirit and fire that flows through Swami Vivekananda.

We are faced in India and the world with many problems, terribly difficult problems. How are we to deal with them? There is the politician's way of dealing with them, the statesman's way if you like—I am not talking to you about the opportunists. Unfortunately, the politician or statesman has, to some extent, to be opportunist in the sense that he has to deal with things as they are, with the materials that he has. He cannot put across something which the people do not understand or cannot live up to. He has to face that difficulty always and, what is more, especially in an age which calls itself democratic—and democracy I feel is fundamentally good. But democracy also means that what you do must ultimately be understood and appreciated and acted upon by a large majority of people. If the large numbers of people do not understand or do not appreciate it,

then even the truth that you possess cannot be put across to them. So the politicians and statesmen have to make, very often, compromises even with the truth, because the people's receptivity of truth is not enough. I do not know whether this is good or bad; but it so happens, and looking at it from a statesman's or a politician's point of view, there appears to be no alternative; for if he were to do something else, he would be pushed away and others with a clearer perception of the limitations of the majority will take his place.

Now, on the other hand, the prophets deal with truth in a different way. The prophet sticks to truth whatever the consequences, and often because he sticks to the truth, he is stoned to death or shot, or killed in some other way. That is the way of the prophet. That has been the way and that will still be the way of the prophet. Of course the prophet is stoned to death or killed, but the killer does not kill the truth. Truth is greater even than the prophet, and the prophet lives in that truth even more vividly than if he had been alive.

Always there are these two approaches: the approach of the prophet and the approach of the political leader or statesman. Neither approach can be said to be, at least in terms of today or in terms of a limited period, a wholly effective approach.

In long distance terms one might say, perhaps, that the prophet's approach is the best; but one cannot carry on politics or public affairs of a country in these days through long distance terms, though generations later the truth will be appreciated; because he will cease to have the opportunity to carry on if he does that. Though the prophet's way may theoretically be the best, it does seem a little difficult to give effect to it during his time.

On the other hand, the politician's and the statesman's way, however well meant, leads from compromise to compromise. It is a slippery path. Once you enter that path, each succeeding compromise may lead you farther away from the truth. What one may want to do may be ignored in the existing circumstances. Shall we hold on to the truth as we see it, or shall we think so much about the existing circumstances as to forget the truth itself? That is the problem that humanity and people who are responsible for the ordering of things in this world have continually to face, and it is a very difficult problem, and all one can say is that in so far as it is possible, the statesman should adhere to truth, or, at any rate, he should aim at that truth, even though he may indulge in temporary compromises. Once he loses sight of that, then he might go astray, very far.

It is difficult to deal with day to day affairs without paying any heed to the understanding and receptivity of man's mind to the truth. It is important to know how far that truth is understood and finds some kind of reception in men's minds. If the politician does not do so, if his words pass over their heads, then even the prophet's words have no meaning to these people. Therefore one has to interpret that truth and limit it even to some extent, from the point of view of man's receptivity to it.

Now we live in an age when scientific and technical advances have gone very far indeed, more especially in a country like the U.S.A. Technically and industrially they are a very advanced country and they have achieved there a high standard of material and physical life. I have no doubt that culturally, too, they are advancing in many ways. Nevertheless it must be said of the world that man's mental or moral advance has not kept pace with his technical and scientific advance, and that is a dangerous thing, because sci-

ence and technology are weapons of tremendous power. We have got these weapons, if you like, in the atomic power. Atomic energy can be used—I think when it can be produced in simpler ways—for the tremendous benefits of the human race. Atomic energy can also be used for destruction on a colossal scale of the human race. Science and technology are just things which are neither good nor bad; it is the user of them that can be good or bad. And if a human being gets these tremendous weapons, it becomes very important that he should know how to use them properly. That means that he should be morally and spiritually advanced to know how to use them properly for proper needs. He should know what he is aiming at ultimately.

Now it can be said that humanity as a whole, individuals apart, has not advanced to that standard yet, despite all the religions, all the churches, temples and mosques to the contrary. And that is the misfortune of the age. We fight for our petty dogmas and petty customs amongst ourselves, calling ourselves religious men, and the like, while we do not even know how to behave to our neighbors properly and decently, and the world hovers on the edge of repeated catastrophes.

We find, therefore, in the world two types of forces, call them if you like, forces of destruction and forces of construction. For the moment, if I say that I have faith in the forces of construction, I cannot justify that statement except by saying that it is an act of faith on my part. There is no particular logic behind it; it is just that I believe in it, although I cannot justify it. Nevertheless, whether you believe in it or not, one should make up one's mind clearly as to how we are going to strengthen these unifying and constructive forces and oppose those forces which destroy and disrupt. And I think you can only do that if you have a certain moral

foundation, certain moral concepts which will hold together your ideals and your general life If you have none, then the disruptive forces, I think, are bound to gain advantage.

Now to come back to what I began with. Men like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, men like Swami Vivekananda and men like Mahatma Gandhi are great unifying forces, great constructive geniuses of the world, not only in regard to the particular teachings that they taught, but their approach to the world and their conscious and unconscious influence on it is of the most vital importance to us. You may or you may not accept some particular advice of Mahatmaji on economic or other grounds; but his fundamental approach to life, his constructive, unifying approach, as applied to various problems of India, that is of vital importance. If you do not accept that, then you really are on the side of destruction and disruption. His approach—quite apart from the particular advice that he gave—his approach was fundamentally the approach of India, of the Indian mind and of the Indian genius. Although Sri Ramakrishna was a man of God and religion, and was not saying anything about politics, it is his fundamental approach that counts. And while I am a man of politics, not dabbling much in or saying much about other matters, spiritual and the like, nevertheless I do feel that our public affairs, and our life in general, would become much the poorer in quality, if that spiritual element and the moral standard were lacking.

India, as the rest of the world, faces these difficult problems and questions, and all of us—whether as individuals, communities, groups or nations—are being put to very severe tests. Because I have faith in India I believe that India will not only survive these tests but will make good, because I think that in spite of our weakness, there is fundamental vitality, which has enabled us to carry on all these

millennia, and which will now function much more effectively and vividly, having got the opportunity now.

I have that faith; but faith is not enough. We have to work for it and we have not only to work for it, but work for it with that clear vision before us. That vision we may apply to India, but it is essentially a larger vision to be applied to the world. It is not a narrowing vision. Our nationalism must not be a narrow nationalism. Swami Vivekananda, though a great nationalist, never preached anything else. His was a kind of nationalism which automatically slipped into Indian nationalism which was part of internationalism.

So it is that broad approach that we must learn from those great men, and if we learn it and act up to it to the best of our ability, then we shall honor their memory and we shall serve our country with some advantage, and possibly also serve humanity. *"Jai Hind!"*

To consider mankind otherwise than brethren, to think favors are peculiar to one nation and exclude others plainly supposes a darkness in the understanding. For, as God's love is universal, so where the mind is sufficiently influenced by it, it begets a likeness of itself, and the heart is enlarged towards all men. —*John Woolman*

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern. —*William Blake*

Die and Become.
Till thou hast learned this
Thou art but a dull guest
On this dark planet.
—*Goethe*

THE MOTHER IN NATURE

By Jule Winslow

Whenever we celebrate the great Hindu Festival of the Divine Mother, which comes in the Fall of the year, we may reflect more deeply if we understand why the ancient Indo-Aryans set aside this special time for reflection on and acknowledgment of the Great Mother principle.

The Ancients had an intuitive knowing of the forces of Nature, many of which we are learning all too slowly with our rational minds. One of the most important of the forces which they recognized and worshipped was the *Mahashakti,* the Universal Mother. In their prayers and hymns of praise we find a deeper and broader understanding of the Mother principle than we find in the Western recognition and worship of Mary, Mother of God.

Let us turn to Nature and see what instruction she has to offer in this field. If we run our eye up the scale of animal life, we find at the bottom the first animals, the *Protozoa,* a mere jelly-like substance, then the *Coelenterate*—coral, sea anemones, etc. Next in mixed array, the *Echinoderms*—starfish, sea urchins, etc., worms and mollusks. Above these the *Pisces*—vertebrate fish; then the *Amphibia,* animals with both gills and lungs; next the *Reptilia,* the animals between fishes and birds, as snakes, crocodiles, etc.; then the *Aves,* the birds. Then—what? The *Mammals,* the Mothers. There Nature stopped; she has never made anything physical since. In much the same sense that a factory is designed to turn out machines, it seems the physical world was designed to turn out Mothers. For over in the vegetable world we are told by the botanist that he also places the mothering plants at the top of his department of Nature. His highest division is the *Phaenogamous,* a name made up of two Greek

words meaning "to appear" and "marriage", describing their reproductive specialization, and foreshadowing Nature's wider effort in the animal world.

In this study of science we see how Nature strove toward the perfecting of the Mother; how in the lowest order a Mother produced hundreds, thousands, and even millions of offspring, who bore her no resemblance and toward whom her only duty was the hatching of the egg, and the building of a shelter where food was available; there her responsibility ended toward her young, for they were prenatally equipped to care for themselves. Next we see her producing less and assuming a more lengthy and detailed responsibility, and again producing only the number that could be hatched by the warmth of her body and fed by her until able to fend for themselves, bearing her an ever closer resemblance at the time of birth, needing not only a protective shelter, but also her active defense of their lives, necessitating an ever wider and deeper instinctual bond between them, until finally, through countless steps and countless ages, there emerged a more complete mother-type: one who produced but one or two at a time, bearing a likeness to her at birth, helpless and completely dependent upon her for survival, demanding so much of her in time and energy.

Conditions, exigencies and time: time for love, the opportunity for love, and an object to love. For love is born of care; and solicitude—a feeling between that which cares and that which is cared for—is the beginning of love; unconscious and instinctual in the beginning, to be sure, but sure to become the Mother-love that protects and cares for her young over a long enough period for the higher intelligence to develop before they are sent out to play their role in life.

Contrast the time and devotion of the human Mother

with those of the animal and you will recognize one of the most important and final steps in the vast process of physical evolution. You will understand why the modern science of psychology had to abandon the idea, of ten or twenty years ago, of the laboratory as the perfect environment for rearing a child, and now seeks to assure it the affection and solicitude of a Mother for its ideal growth. To get rid of the chaff they threw out the wheat also. And you will also understand why they are having to abandon the ideal of the undisciplined childhood of the animal and return to a discipline of the child that fosters the self-discipline of the adult, if he is to reach maturity and avoid adult infantilism. We can perfect to some degree what Nature took millions of years to evolve, but we can hardly hope to invent a better way.

At this point we may ask *why* Nature went to all this trouble to evolve a Mother, a species through which love could manifest itself? There is no more instructive question in all of science, for in its answer lies the answer to one of man's most profound questions—"Is man merely a physical being, destined only for a life that ends with the end of his physical existence?" If so, Nature has gone to a great deal of trouble for nothing! Any sincere student of Nature will tell you that only a shallow appraisal of Nature and her laws could lead one into such an erroneous assumption. It could not have been to develop a perfect physical type, for we see amazing physical types emerge without much care or solicitude on the part of the Mother. When we look for the deeper meaning in the "feeling between the Mother and her young" we cannot fail to recognize the first faint stirrings and the gradual emergence of selfless love, the fallow field out of which grows an expression so exalted we term it divine. When we see its perfect expression in the life of

our Prophets we deem it a thing not merely to emulate, but even to worship. It is the ideal which inspires man to the highest and most Godlike expression of himself.

The story of the evolution of the Mother is the story of the evolution of love; and in it lies the story of the complement and completion of Darwin's story of the evolution of the male side of nature in "Origin of Species." His is the story of the "Struggle for Life," a description of the evolution of individualism, this, the story of the "Struggle for the Lives of Others," a description of the evolution of altruism; the one, the ascendancy of the physical; the other, the ascendancy of the psychical and a confirmation of man as a spiritual as well as a physical being.

We see the two great and forever separate types emerge and play out their roles in life. Different in origin, having traveled to their destination by separate routes, yet forming the perfect complement of one another. For to man, by virtue of his particular gift, has been assigned the task of satisfying the function of Nutrition; and to woman, by virtue of her particular gift, the function of Reproduction. To him the destiny of occupying himself with the securing of food and shelter, the battle of individual survival, agricultural and industrial progress; to woman, the destiny of securing the continuation of the race and the guarding of the sanctities of the home and family, the basis of man's moral and ethical progress. Today's scientist has but recently learned what Nature knew all along. The function of reproduction is not complete when the physical species is born, the Mother's care and love are necessary, or in time the child will die or attain only a warped growth, and the earlier achievement of reproduction fail.

We can here see the moment in evolution when the physical hands its unfinished task to the psychical, and morals and

ethics are born. For if the Mother will here exercise her highest instinct and intelligence she cannot fail to realize that only in a moral and ethical society will her young attain to their fullest stature, and hers the duty and responsibility to so teach her husband and sons.

Marriage evolved because the Mother needed the Father to help protect and care for her and the child during the long period assigned for the fulfillment of her task. Here again time played its part, created the conditions for his taming and domestication, a necessary factor for the institution of the family: the beginning of society and civilization born of her solicitude. In the family his task is to keep individualism alive, and hers, to foster altruism; so these blended in the children become the two master principles which have acted and reacted throughout history to keep man seeking the direction in which true life lies.

Only when we understand something of this, do we appreciate the intuitive wisdom of the Ancients as they made obeisance to *Mahashakti,* the Universal Mother. For to them it was through her secret alchemy that the physical became the higher principles of sympathy and affection, which alone can change the course of evolution and determine a diviner destiny for the human race.

Suppose we subtract this whole manifestation of the Mother from the field of Nature; then must we realize that without it there would have been no Prophets' wisdom (for of what do they teach but of altruism and love); no society and civilization as we know it today, for there would have been no family and no striving for the betterment but only for the survival of the individual; no inspiration toward freedom, for freedom is born of and survives only through responsibility and care. Without the blessings of *Mahashakti,* there would be left only an unconscious, dogged and purposeless existence.

So we see what the Ancients understood with their hearts and expressed in the poetic and dream language of religion. We must note that man existed in this unrational, dream-like state for ages before he became self-conscious and rational, before his reasonable powers of discernment developed; and thus the myth, the poetic, the language of the heart preceded prose, the language of the head, in literature. We who are born in the time of speaking from the head must find analogies between our language and that of the Ancients before we can penetrate their wisdom and revivify the ancient Truth. When we understand with our heads what they knew with their hearts, our own hearts can experience that divine ecstasy in the presence of the wonders of Nature that inspired the Ancients to found the great, imperishable religions, and our own faith will be born anew.

No woman can deeply comprehend her true function in Nature and fail to feel a new responsibility, a glorious destiny in being a woman and fulfilling the tasks Nature has given her; and man in this comprehension must revaluate the place of woman, and hold a deeper respect for her divine function. This renewal of appreciation must, however, carry with it a more vigorous protest against the negative, the sentimental and the careless in Motherhood, the all too human avoidance of responsibility, the all too human tendency to pamper and thereby warp. There is no pampering, no carelessness and no favoritism in the Mother principle.

Thus the Festival of the Divine Mother will hold a new and intimate significance for each of us as we give thanks for the blessings of love, our gift from *Mahashakti*.

Let a man first learn to fix his heart on God and then his good deeds will have virtue; but if a man's heart is unsteady, even the great things he does will be of small advantage.

—*Meister Eckhart*

THE CONQUEST OF EGO

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

The theme of the Service this morning brings to my mind an old Sanskrit saying: "There is no enemy as great as man's own ego."

When we begin to think deeply upon such a statement, many questions arise in our mind. "Why should ego be man's enemy and not his friend? Do we not primarily live by the ego? Is not ego the paramount and most substantial feature of human personality? Then, if the most important and essential part of man's being is against him like an enemy, how will a man operate properly in this world?"

The answer to these questions can be found in the study of human nature, which clearly reveals the working processes of the ego. Let us consider a person who is largely centered in his ego. (In fact, most of us are.) An egocentric is usually an unstable and unhappy person. All his activities are governed by the demands of the ego. Will and desire are the two vital tools in its hands. It is through these the ego seeks expression and satisfaction. Life is so constituted that it frequently obstructs the ego through circumstances; it brings defeat, disappointment and frustration. When ego is thwarted in the fulfillment of its will and desire, it rebels, fights and causes turmoil and misery to the individual. In other words, it acts as an enemy, disturbing man's peace of mind and stability of consciousness.

The above is merely a brief observation of the complex proceedings of that powerful entity we call our ego. It is the ruler in our house, the master workman directing our intelligence, mind and intellect. It knows itself to be supreme in its dwelling-place, recognizes none as its equal or superior, and by its own strength is armed against domination or control. Therefore, the conquest of the ego — forceful, domi-

nant, willful, independent, strong and unyielding — is by no means an easy task. To make this enemy a friend, to win it so that it may help instead of hinder us, is indeed a supreme achievement.

The wise men are quite clear and decisive as to how ego can be won and conquered. They advise us to discover its Superior hidden within. They speak of the Soul, the Spirit, man's higher Self, the counterpart of the ego. According to the philosophers, this is the true entity of man, from which the ego derives its life, power and vitality. We are told that in order to cope with the ego we must know this Self intimately, realize Its magnitude fully and use its potentialities with unremitting care.

Many are the interpretations of the ego handed down to us by those enlightened on the subject. Some of the philosophers speak of it as a non-entity, having no existence of its own. Again, it is the usurper, occupying the throne of the human heart, the seat of the Spirit. Sri Ramakrishna compares it with an onion consisting of innumerable layers. In his inimitable way he explains how when an onion is peeled and all layers are removed, nothing more remains of it.

It is not altogether simple to blow away the ego or our sense of "I" as a non-entity. If it does not exist, what does? How can we deny it unless we have found something else to take its place? Here begins the practical application of the teaching which, sincerely and steadfastly followed, will grant one mastery over the ego.

There are two distinct approaches to the problem of conquering the ego, the one monistic, the other dualistic. The first, although more popular, is extremely difficult. A true monist does not recognize any other entity but God or Truth. He himself is the Spirit, complete, supreme, absolute, all

in all. He bows to no one, is subordinate to no one. He is the ruler the Lord. Unless such an attitude is the result of a man's spiritual realization and not merely a bold and aggressive assumption, he can easily be led astray through delusion and made to play the hypocrite. The ego itself will usurp the role of the Spirit — perfect, pure, sinless, sorrowless, immortal — without striving to lose its identity in It.

The dualistic way is man's recognition of a Power greater than himself, separate yet within. To God he bows, before Him he is willing to take a humble place. The dualist makes God the Lord and Master of his house and remains therein as His servant or child.

There is an incident in the life of Sankara, India's outstanding monistic teacher, which illustrates how one may deal with the ego in order to conquer it. One day while the great preceptor sat in meditation he saw the shadow of someone passing by. It was one of his disciples who had been keeping watch. Sankara spoke: "Who is it?" The student answered: "It is I, Sire." The teacher exclaimed: "If this 'I' is so dear to you, then either extend it to the Infinite or renounce it completely."

This story may in some measure explain the monistic and dualistic ways used by all spiritual aspirants interested in the conquest of ego. To extend the dear "I" to the Infinite would mean making it one with God through complete identification, while renunciation of "I" would imply irrevocable surrender of one's being to God through humility, dedication and self-abnegation. Whichever path is chosen, we soon discover that they are closely interrelated. One cannot be a true monist without humility and self-surrender, nor can a true dualist escape eventually complete identification with the object of his devotion.

What one must remember habitually is that theoretical knowledge or belief in an idea must be translated into practical action. To conquer the ego, we must apply the teaching we accept as truth and strive to blend it with our life in a manner so that it may transform us completely.

In the Scriptures of India there are some magnificent sayings. They are called "Mahâbakyam." The Upanishads, India's Forest Books, contain two outstanding ones: "Tat tvam asi," "Thou art That," and "Aham Brahmâsmi," "I am Brahman." We can pronounce such statements, reiterate them, and use them as affirmations. But we need to go further. Realization is not possible without spiritual practice. To prove that we are not the body or the mind or the intellect or the ego, that we are Spirit which is above ego, mind, intellect and the body, we must use discrimination and meditation until we can really stand on the bedrock of Truth and become convinced.

The story is told of the two students who were sent to the same teacher. They are described as *deva* and *danava*—one with godly nature and the other of demonic tendencies. The teacher gave them the same instruction: "Know, thou art That." The disciple with lower propensities went away without questioning. He was satisfied, for the teacher had proclaimed that he was God. He felt free to be himself, and to enjoy sense pleasures with greater zeal. He fulfilled his desires to the utmost capacity, became more greedy, egotistic and tyrannical.

The other student was puzzled by his instructor's teaching. He mused within himself: "How can I be That—Truth or God? God is without imperfection and sin; I am not without evil, sin and iniquity. Is this 'I,' my ego, the same as the Spirit? Ego is limited, faulty, susceptible to anger, hate, grief and joy — how can it be the transcendent

Soul? Thus he wondered, analyzed, investigated within himself, and returned to the teacher for clarification of his instruction. He searched deeper and deeper, following the process of higher discrimination, separating the body from the mind, mind from the ego and ego from the higher Self, reflecting faithfully upon the Spirit until all his doubts were removed and he discovered the hidden One. In time realization came to him and illumined his entire consciousness.

Such is the result of true application. When we are imbued with the desire to put into practice our theoretical knowledge of high philosophy we gain definite proof of its power and merit, whereas by misusing it we become more involved in the lower order of self-expression.

In trying to conquer the ego we must bear in mind that the repressive method is not always helpful nor altogether satisfactory. This has been verified in the lives of countless people who, having once been subjected to suppression of their natural self, have suffered disastrous effects. A person with a weak ego habitually hindered in its legitimate expression or dominated by a strong egoistic personality, can eventually break down and become crushed. The psychologists and psychiatrists of today are doing their utmost to rescue many such mental casualities. The solution to this problem lies in the individual's effort to direct the ego through the proper channel, to teach it recognition of its own strength as derived from the Source and to allow it sufficient freedom for expression by arousing faith in its higher possibilities.

According to psychiatry, ego is not to be destroyed; in fact, ego-strength is indispensable for the integration and sublimation of human personality in its adjustment to life and in gaining a wholesome and happy state of being.

Philosophy, too, does not advocate annihilation of the

ego, as we are inclined to interpret the term. In fact, ego cannot be destroyed. It can be mastered, conquered or transcended. The man who has accomplished this is a spiritual being: he lives and acts by his divine nature; his ego is the tool of the Spirit and not of self-will or self-interest.

Ordinarily a person is not interested in conquering the ego. He prefers its natural expression, which gives him a sense of importance and power. Even when the ego tries to overreach itself by becoming unpleasantly domineering in its relation to others, he indulges it instead of putting a check upon its tirades. Not until he sees it as a hindrance to his well-being, happiness and progress does a man consciously proceed to restrain, direct or overcome the ego. This usually is the work of those who are seeking the spiritual life, who recognize the necessity and importance of dealing with the ego rightfully in order to achieve their definite aim — namely, realization of the Divine Self.

Sri Ramakrishna tells us that as long as egoism is not eradicated one cannot have salvation or Self-knowledge or liberation. Here are his own words: "The sun can give heat and light to the whole world, but it cannot do so when the clouds shut out its rays. Similarly, so long as egotism veils the heart, God cannot shine upon it. Egotism is like a cloud that keeps God hidden from our sight. If it vanishes by the mercy of the Guru, God is perceived in all His glory. Freedom will come when your 'I-hood' vanishes and you yourself are merged in the Divinity."

This great illumined teacher of men, while fully aware of the difficulty, also points out the practical way for the conquest of ego. He says there are two kinds of ego, "ripe" and "unripe." It is the unripe ago which keeps a man ignorant and deluded by his notion of "I" and "mine," making him proud of his earthly endowments—wealth, pres-

tige, social position, success and personal achievement. The ripe ego is the assertion, "I am the servant of God." Sri Ramakrishna gives us encouragement: "If you feel proud, let it be in the thought that you are the servant of God, the son of God. Great men have the nature of children. They are always children before Him, so they are free from pride. All their strength is of God, and not their own. It belongs to Him and comes from Him."

In order to reach the state of which Sri Ramakrishna speaks, one's thoughts, energies and devotion must be directed and wholly dedicated to God. The ego itself must serve the Spirit and not its own ends. Such an achievement is seldom sudden or immediate; it is the gradual unfoldment of man's inner being coming into full manifestation over the passage of time. It entails endless struggles on the part of the discipline of the lower nature. Let us take heart in the knowledge that whoever is possessed with tenacity will not fail, in spite of repeated drawbacks and disappointments.

One who has conquered his ego even partially can regard himself most fortunate. His is the victory over all troubles and conflicts, circumstantial and mental. Nothing can truly afflict him from within or without, for he becomes the master of every situation that tends to test his spirit. He would not be offended or feel injured nor seek consolation or attention nor be a victim of turbulence or insatiable desire. Practice of spiritual life endows him with a clearsightedness by which he learns to detect the movements of the ego and to protect himself against its ravages.

Absence of ego or conquered ego gives our personality a serene lustre. It is gentle, yet strong, happy, contented, free of self-assertion, contained within itself enduring, fortified and peaceful.

Let me in conclusion say that ours is the choice to become

whatever we desire to be. Within us lies all the power for correction, sublimation and redemption. As we learn the use of this power, we change from ordinary mortals into spiritual beings; our self-centeredness is replaced by self-oblivion, self-love by dedication to Truth; and in the place of ego shines our real Self, one with God.

If you want to be a true doer of divine works, your first aim must be to totally free from all desire and self-regarding ego. All your life must be an offering and a sacrifice to the Supreme; your only object in action shall be to serve, to receive, to fulfil, to become a manifesting instrument of the Divine Shakti in her works. You must grow in the divine consciousness till there is no difference between your will and hers, no motive except her impulsion in you, no action that is not her conscious action in you and thr'ough you.

Until you are capable of this complete dynamic identification, you have to regard yourself as a soul and body created for her service, one who does all for her sake. Even if the idea of the separate worker is strong in you and you feel that it is you who do the act, yet it must be done for her. All stress of egotistic choice, all hankering after personal profit, all stipulation of self-regarding desire must be extirpated from the nature. There must be no demand for fruit and no seeking for reward; the only fruit for you is the pleasure of the Divine Mother and the fulfilment of her work, your only reward a constant progression in divine consciousness and calm and strength and bliss.

But a time will come when you will feel more and more that you are the instrument and not the worker. . . . There must be no attachment to the work or the result, no laying down of conditions, no claim to possess the Power that should possess you, no pride of the instrument, no vanity or arrogance.

—*Sri Aurobindo*

POPLI AND THE PUPPETEER

By Dorothy Hughes

(This charming fairy tale, or allegory—the first of a series that the "Message of the East" will publish concerning Popli, "the puppet with the real live heart"—should help to make living, to children and grown folk alike, the fundamental spirit of the Vedanta philosophy.)

Darkness was creeping over the little island and up the trunk of a great oak tree. High on a bare limb a queer little creature sat teetering comically. His cap was cocked over one round eye and the tassel was tickling his pink, tilted nose. It took a second look to decide that it was neither Pinocchio nor Dopey. His elfish expression and streamlined body made him seem to be a child of Fairy-Queen Titania and Superman. But this couldn't be, for he was a puppet, with strings. It was easy to see that he was lost and forlorn. He had been too anxious to reach the top of the tree, and now he was as tangled in his strings as a spider caught in his own web. Such a fantastic creature in such a gymnastic predicament could be none other than Popli, the plastic puppet with the real, live heart.

He looked all around with a shudder and could dimly see the shores and the dark waters beyond. The silence whispered warnings of his doom, and the wind sent a chill through his slim body. He was so alone he felt he must be the only creature in existence.

Suddenly a weird screech rent the stillness.

"This is the end!" sobbed Popli. And as suddenly another screech pierced the darkness, and Popli listened, stiff as a stake, while his little heart rattled "Klakity-klak! Klakity-klak!" Then looking cautiously below him, he noticed two slender limbs entwined closely. He saw at once that they had been playfully wrestling. He sighed in relief, then scolded, "Hush-sh! you limbs are entirely too noisy when you

get together!" But a defiant shriek was their only reply and it came with such startling force that it knocked Popli off the limb and down he went!

The limbs laughed and cackled like old witches. Popli's face grew red as he wondered what they were laughing at. He looked up, and there above his funny little head was the earth instead of the sky. It was moving back and forth, back and forth, and the limbs shrieked with laughter at every move.

Suddenly he realized he had not fallen to the ground at all, but was hanging upside down by his strings. As he was struggling to free himself, a melodious bird-song touched him with its beauty. He stopped struggling and listened. He cocked his head this way and that, puzzled at the clear, sweet notes. At first they were just bird-notes, but as he listened he heard these words, "Popli! Yoo-hoo! Here I come! Popli! Yoo-hoo! Here I am!"

Then a cinnamon-colored bird with a white-spotted breast flew into the oak where Popli dangled like a dreaming bat.

"Who are you?" asked Popli.

"I'm the Woodthrush," answered the bird. "I've come early this spring."

"Oh!" said Popli, still swinging from the limb.

"I thought you knew me, Popli," said the bird a little sadly, "You've spent enough time here."

"I do know you, but I thought you were just a bird, like a tree is a tree and a flower is a flower."

"Why, Popli, I thought you knew all of us!" and the astonished bird fluttered about him as if he were a strange curiosity.

"So did I!" answered Popli, "But whoever you are, please help me out of this tangle."

"That's what I came for, Popli; didn't you hear me call?" asked the Woodthrush.

"Yes, but how did you know I was here?" asked Popli surprised.

"Somebody told me, somebody you don't know, for if you did you wouldn't be in this topsy-turvy tanglement!"

"But I was alone! Who could have seen me fall—hmmm? Who—who?"

"Who! Who!" teased an owl from a hemlock tree.

"If you keep on being so curious, it won't take you long to find out!" And the Woodthrush loosened the last thread that held Popli suspended from the oak limb, and down he fell. He landed in the midst of the daintiest little lavendacious beauties he had ever seen. They were huddled all about him, staring and nodding to one another in shy wonderment.

He looked around and there was not another blossom in the woods. All was brown except for a few whiskers of onion grass here and there. Then he looked back into the sweet faces of these starry-eyed darlings and fell in love with every one. He sighed blissfully. Then something breathed softly upon them and they swayed and dipped and leaned gently and caressed his cheek. Then he noticed that they were whispering one to another. "Of course he knows us!" a pale blue one said with a flip of a fragile petal. Popli, lost in the ecstasy of such delightful company, realized his blunder. He should have made their acquaintance in a more gentlemanly manner. One blushing face leaned toward him and asked, "Do you know me?"

Popli sat up proudly and answered, "Certainly I know you! You're — you're a — flower!"

"See! See!" cried the others, "We told you he didn't know us! He has seen us every spring and he doesn't know our name!" and they turned their faces from him in disappointment.

Popli cocked his head from side to side and tried to puzzle out his error. "A bird is a bird, and a — no! A bird is a woodthrush, and a flower is a flower — can a flower be something beside just a flower?"

All the little faces turned toward him now and smiled and nodded. The blossom that blushed so prettily bent toward him and whispered, "I am Hepatica." And they all echoed the name in a hushed melody, "Hepatica! Hepatica!"

Popli frowned in bewilderment and tried to remember where he had heard that name before. Then suddenly beaming, he asked, "Hepatica?" Then ventured dubiously, "Not —ah, not Sal?"

The disillusioned little blossoms shook their heads sadly and a snowfall of petals fell over him and covered his shame.

When Popli lifted his face from the soft cloud of petals, not a blossom was left to make his apologies to. He was surrounded by empty stalks. He tried to get up and run away, but found he was still tangled in his strings. The Woodthrush had only untied him from the limb and his arms and legs were still bound tightly.

If only he had recognized the Hepaticas, perhaps they could have helped him. He sighed and began struggling to unloose himself, but the more he struggled the more tangled he became.

Finally, as the darkness began to blind him, he called in terror, "Help! Help! Somebody help me!"

The Owl answered, "Who? Who?"

Popli sat up and listened, then called out again, "Help! Help! Who will help me?"

And the wise bird answered, "You! You!"

Popli echoed, "Who?" and the Owl re-echoed, "You!"

Popli cocked his head and blinked his little eyes and asked in a crooked squeak, "Me?"

But all was silence, all was darkness. He lay back and wondered how he could help himself when he was so bound and tangled. Then he dozed into a kind of dream and he was suddenly conscious of something or someone near him. The darkness began to grow bright and a soft voice came through the heavy silence.

"I heard you call, my little one. Will you let me help you?"

Popli sat up startled.

"Why are you frightened, Popli? Don't you know me any more?" The voice was gentle, yet frightening.

"Who—who are you?" stuttered Popli, trembling.

"Popli, Popli, I'm ashamed of you!" scolded the voice. "Don't you remember my warning you of this very thing after I had finished making you and set you down here on this island?"

"No! No! I don't remember!" cried Popli hiding his face among the furry Hepatica stalks.

"Are you frightened because you can't see me, Popli?" asked the voice. "If you will try, you will see me. Look here into the light, Popli; what do you see?"

Popli responded to the soft voice and lifted his face slowly. But when he saw the luminous vision, he blinked and shook his head and could not believe his eyes. "It's a mirror! he whispered. "It's my own image I see, yet — yet —it isn't, for there are no eyes, no nose, no mouth, no ears, no hands, no strings — no! it isn't me! Yet, it is! I know it is, but I really don't see it!"

"At last you're beginning to see with your real eyes," said the voice, pleased. "I've waited long for this, Popli, so long!"

"But who are you?" asked Popli.

"Who are YOU?" The voice bounced the question back

and Popli caught it with assurance. "I'm Popli, of course —Popli, the puppet!"

"How do you know?" questioned the voice sternly.

"I just am! I always have been!" answered Popli, proudly.

"Then you don't remember!" and the voice dwindled to a whisper. "You needed me tonight, Popli, and I was here to help you, but I can't help you until you first recognize me."

Popli shook his head in utter bewilderment.

"When you remember that I am your Puppeteer, I will take up your strings and you will never again become lost and tangled. Remember the fun you had making people laugh? How they loved you! Then you broke away from me and have stumbled into one entanglement after another —but, if you prefer it that way. . . ."

"No! No!" cried Popli, "I don't prefer it — I — I. . . ." But it was too late, the beautiful vision had vanished into the darkness and the voice had blended with the murmuring leaves. Popli was too weary to try to puzzle it all out and he cuddled up close to the furry Hepatica plants and drifted softly to sleep.

When morning touched his tousled head and dabbed his face with dew, he sat up and looked around in dreamy-eyed wonderment. "What am I doing here?" he thought. Then he remembered the adventures of the day before, and the dream. . . . Oh, the dream! He thought about it for a few moments, then decided to ignore the whole thing. He couldn't figure out what it was all about anyway, so why worry about it.

He stretched and yawned lazily, then tried to stand up, but his tanglement brought him heavily to the ground. "Oomp!" he went, but tried again. "Oomp!" came louder as he hit the ground, and again he got up and tried to stand

and the loudest "Oomp!" of all echoed through the woods as he sat squarely on a jagged rock. He was in utter despair. He could think of nothing to do but call for help again. His first bellowing "Halloo!" brought a large black ant from a tree-stump.

"What's the big noise?" complained the ant. "It's too cold for me to be out now; why do you disturb me?"

Popli stared in amazement. He had never heard an ant talk before. Until yesterday he had never been able to understand any of the wood-creatures.

"Please help me get loose so I can go home!" begged Popli, with more humility than he knew he possessed.

"Why do you ask me? Why don't you ask him?" answered the ant impatiently.

"Who!" asked Popli.

"The one who helps us! He tells us how to build our tunnels, how to store our food and care for our young. . . . Oh! he tells us everything!" boasted the ant, and his black eyes glistened with pride.

"Where is he?" asked Popli encouraged. "Send him here and I'll ask him!"

"He is here; can't you see him?" laughed the ant.

"I don't see anybody!" complained Popli.

"Don't look for any 'body!' " advised the ant, "look for what you can't see with your eyes."

"A lunatic ant!" thought Popli; "Too bad! Too bad!"

"A blind puppet!" thought the ant; "I must help him."

"Look!" said the ant, "I'll show you how he helps me! As long as you can't see, I'll see for you!" and he crawled to the tangled strings and began gnawing.

"He isn't a lunatic!" thought Popli; "he's smart. How does he know how to do that? Maybe there is someone telling him what to do! But it's funny; I don't see anyone!"

When the ant finished and the string was gnawed neatly in two, he said proudly, "See? It's easy! All you have to do is listen and obey!"

Popli shook his head in dismay and said, "No, I don't see! But thanks for getting my legs loose, now how about my arms?"

The ant turned away, saying, "Sorry, I don't know how to do that!"

"But you do it the same way: just gnaw the string!" and Popli held his arms out pleadingly.

"Nope!" said the ant, "I haven't been told how to do that. I was only demonstrating anyway! I didn't say I'd do all of your work for you. My puppeteer will tell me if he wants me to do it."

Popli's eyes bulged. "Your puppeteer?" he gasped, "Are you a puppet too?"

"Nope!" said the ant, "not a puppetoo . . . just a puppet!"

"Oh! — Oh!" — gasped Popli. "Am I an ant — or is everybody puppets?"

"Keep on wondering and you'll find out!" and the ant scurried away.

Popli stood up and stretched his legs luxuriously. How wonderful it was to be free, to be able to skip and jump again! Now he could go back to the village; and he leaped like a deer over the tree-stump and ran up the hill and across the meadow and into the village.

When he came to his house he realized that he was not free, his arms were still bound; so he kicked on the door until his brother opened it for him.

"Homi, Homi, please help me!" he cried. "I don't know how to untie myself."

His brother looked at him in disgust and took down a big book and said, "Here, read this! It will tell you all about

strings, knots, and how to untangle them!" and he went out and left Popli alone. Popli glanced at the title, "The Book of Knowledge," he read. "How can this help me untie myself? That stupid brother of mine, just wait until he needs my help. I'll show him!" and he ran out of the house in anger.

Professor Pious was walking sedately down the street, mumbling to himself from a little book. Popli dashed out the gate and struck the Professor like a runaway locomotive. When he caught his breath, he pleaded:

"Oh, please, Professor Pious, please show me how to get untangled!"

But the startled Professor raised his eyebrows and asked in a rumbling monotone, "Have you studied your tootilies? Paid your kumdoos? Attended powfest regularly?"

Popli shook his head in bewilderment.

"Well, then," continued the professor, "have you joined yet?"

Popli shook his head harder and thought, "How can all this untangle me?" But he was too confused to utter a sound.

Professor Pious searched in his little book and bellowed pompously, "Ah, then you are a lost sheep! Come with me. . . ." But by this time Popli was half way down the street and still running. He ran swiftly past his house, the school, the church, and over the hill into the quiet woods.

Now he was right back where he started. It was his last chance to get help. He knew he must find it here, for there was no place else to find it and no one else to go to. He tramped through the huckleberry bushes and down to the water's edge where he sat on a sunny log and pondered over his difficulties.

"It's all jaggity!" he said forlornly. "Everything's all

mungled and heckity!" and at that moment he was the most miserable little puppet in the world and wanted nothing more than to sail right off the island and sink forever into the great quiet waters.

But as he sat, he began to feel the tender touch of sunlight on his face, and it was good. He lifted his eyes to the tree-tops and, drifting down to him from the morning blue, was a fluttering fragment of sunlight — or was it only a yellow leaf? It fell nearer and nearer, then danced about his face until he had to shoo it away because it tickled his nose. But back it came, time after time. Popli wanted just to sit and dream and be let alone, but the leaf came back again and again until he finally caught it with his eyes and it stood in midair before him, fluttering and glistening in golden splendor. Then Popli saw that it was not a leaf at all, but a tiny creature with shimmering gossamer wings.

"Watch me! Watch me!" its melodious little voice sang; "I'll take you where you want to go! Keep your eyes on me and follow where I lead you!" and up she flew among the newly budded maple limbs.

Popli knew he couldn't follow her, for he had no wings yet he was following her—he was flying up there with her, and soon they were high into the translucent blue spaces, soaring and dipping, as free as the wind.

Then suddenly everything became dark. Wherever Popli looked it was like black velvet.

"What do you see know?" asked the tiny golden creature as she fluttered close to him.

"Nothing! It's all dark — so dark!" he lamented; "I can't see where I'm going!"

"This isn't darkness, Popli; it's light—intense light! Look beyond and what do you see?"

Popli strained and strained his eyes to try and see through the frightening darkness.

"Don't try so hard!" laughed the little creature. "Relax; let go of yourself and look through the darkness easily and it will clear. Look again now! What do you see?"

"Oh! Oooooh!" cried Popli, "I do see — I do see!" And the darkness opened like a blossom and there before him was the shining vision he had seen in his dream. The same soft voice came to him again, saying, "I am here, Popli; do you remember me?"

Popli swallowed hard and said meekly, "Yes, Sir, I remember you. You are my Puppeteer. I've come to be with you again!"

"But we've never been apart, Popli! You haven't come to me, you have just become aware of me," the silent voice answered.

"Oooooooh!" Popli spoke softly, "I see now!" and he tried to lift his arms toward the beautiful vision but found they were still tied.

"Please ,Sir, please show me how to free myself!" pleaded Popli humbly.

"You are free!" replied the Puppeteer.

"My feet are free but my hands are still bound!" said Popli a little sadly.

"Do you believe your hands are still bound?" questioned the voice.

"I know they are! See! I can't move them!" and he wriggled and grunted in his effort to demonstrate his predicament.

"Then as long as you believe it, you are bound and there is no escape for you," and the voice began to fade away.

"Wait!" cried Popli. "How can I free myself, please tell me how!"

"I have told you that you are free; if you don't believe it, there is nothing more I can do to help you." The voice was

like soft melody. Popli couldn't understand how this could be, but he knew it was his only escape—he had to believe it.

"Do you believe that you are free?" the Puppeteer asked, giving him one more chance.

"Oooooooh! Yes! Yes! I believe it!" whispered Popli earnestly. "I am free; I know I am!" and he lifted his arms and waved them about in a frenzy of delight, shouting, "I am free! I am free!"

"Now that you are aware of your freedom, how are you going to use it?" the Puppeteer asked.

"Oooooooo! Mmmmmmmmm!"—Popli was puzzled.

"It's a very special blessing to be free, you know, and will disappear if it is neglected," warned the voice.

"I'll do whatever you say, Sir!" said Popli hastily. "Take up my strings and do whatever you wish with me!"

The Puppeteer lifted his strings gently and Popli stood up straight and strong. Then the little goblin creature flew about him again, tickling his nose with her wings, and dazzling his eyes.

"Here, Wisdom, you take a string too," said the Puppeteer, and he handed the little creature the string that was attached to Popli's right hand.

"I'll make him hold it open so he'll always be ready to give," she sang joyfully.

"Here we go!" they called, and shot like a streak of silver lightning down toward the tiny island that lay in the midst of the great dark waters.

Then all was silent. Popli dreamily brushed something away from his nose. It fluttered back again and he brushed it away more vigorously. But again it flew back and twirled around his face and tickled his nose until his patience was gone and he struck himself square on the nose trying to swat

it. He shook his head drowsily, blinked, and looked around. He was still sitting on the log by the river.

"How did I get back here?" he thought. Then looking closely at the trees and rocks and birds he realized it was not the same place at all; it had grown more beautiful than he could possibly imagine. As he looked about he could see things he had never seen before and he felt a kind of exalted happiness he had never before known. Then looking down at his bound arms he saw a single strand that just seemed to be waiting to be pulled from a knot. Popli wasted no time. He pulled it carefully through and his arms fell free. He jumped and shouted, "I'm free! I'm really truly free! And my eyes — they seem bigger and sharper, for I can see clearer and farther!"

Then gazing in wonder at the beauty about him, he began to realize that nothing had really changed, no, nothing had changed but himself.

Then something caught his eye. It was a large black and yellow spider crawling toward him. He lifted his foot to step on it, but something held it back. "Ah — ah!" tinkled a tiny voice, a very familiar voice. Oh yes, that was it, the voice of Wisdom. He recalled his dream vividly now.

"You know better than to kill Miranda, Popli; she's your friend!" explained Wisdom.

"Oooooh!" said Popli, "thank you, thank you for stopping me!"

"I didn't stop you; it was your Puppeteer. I only told you why you shouldn't kill her," and she fluttered away.

Popli remembered the warning of the Puppeteer about losing his freedom if he didn't use it, and dashed toward the village in joyful eagerness to begin his work. He felt a new tug and pull that seemed to be driving him on, showing him the way. He skipped merrily and sang in gay abandon.

"I'll tell everyone the wonderful news, and I'll help all the other tangled puppets to find their Puppeteers," he thought. "But maybe there is only one, then I can't have him all to myself," he pondered. "Then I'll be alone sometimes. Oooooh!"

"Do you believe you'll be alone?" whispered the soft voice of the Puppeteer.

"Oooooh, no! No, Sir!" answered Popli, startled.

"Then — will you be alone?" questioned the voice.

A broad grin broke out on Popli's blushing face and he laughed heartily to think he had been so ignorant and doubtful. Then away he skipped over the hill, singing, "No, I'll never be alone again, I'll never be alone! And I'm free! I'm free! I'm free!"

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

Continued from the Summer Issue

The disciple is asked not infrequently, "When will the Note-book end?" The answer must be, "Soon, very soon!" Of the written record there remains an account of one more gathering at the Queensberry Street Centre, plus a page or two of notes, jotted down in California after the opening of the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta in 1923. These, with the addition of vagrant recollections, dealing with what may seem to the reader to be inconsequential happenings, comprise all that yet remains to be published.

There is, however, more to the Note-book than written words in a leather-bound volume. The true Note-book is the mind of the disciple, and where the impressions have been deep and abiding, it resembles the miraculous pitcher of Philemon and Baucis, in that as fast as you seem to empty it, it fills right up again.

These memory recordings, however, come as they please, with no due regard to time and place, whereas the written words are more exact and sequential. Nevertheless, spiritual truth and all related matters are better remembered than merely read. The Ancients felt this profoundly, and for centuries — in India at least — holy teachings were passed "from mouth to ear" and were preserved in the minds of succeeding generations of disciples. There could be no inattention in those days, no lazy listening. Anyone capable of such discourtesy to God and to the guru proved himself unready for the inner discipline.

Naturally the power to remember was developed to an extraordinary extent, and whole libraries, as it were, of sacred texts walked around upon two feet.

Fa Hsien, the famous Chinese Buddhist devotee and pilgrim, in the record he kept concerning his long trek from far Cathay to India, whither he went to procure certain Buddhist documents, comments on the extent to which the teachings were preserved, not on palm-leaf parchment, but in the minds of the faithful. It is written that scholars and sages often could repeat hundreds and even thousands of verses of scripture without the least difficulty.

Swami Paramananda valued this tradition and sought to encourage it in regard to the Shrine Services in Boston and California. This daily worship always follows a certain form of simple ritual which includes prayers and at least one song. Visitors who through the years have been privileged to share in these devotions, invariably have asked for copies of the words that are repeated or sung, but generally their request has been refused. This no doubt has appeared arbitrary and unreasonable, but there has been back of the refusal this ancient tradition. There was, first of all, on the Swami's part, the desire to protect these prayers from

indiscriminate distribution. Furthermore, the spiritual seeker must gain through the effort of remembrance. The attentive mind, the listening ear, the concentrated attention, as well as faithful attendance at the Services, all have their great value; but nowadays people are too used to mental crutches to realize this.

A great example of marvelous memory in modern times is the noting down by the disciple M of the teachings of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, whose every word by a special grace and also by virtue of M's devotion, seemed to be photographed on his mind as soon as it entered his ear. The result is a voluminous and detailed account of innumerable conversations, plus all the side lights of setting and occasion, which make this "Gospel" an incomparably rich and unique contribution to sacred literature and history. Herein is portrayed the Master, not only in high ecstasy, but in his lighter moods and more human relations.

The memory of the heart is needed as well as the memory of the head if there is to be a living reflection from the past. Especially is this true of great spiritual figures whose effect on the heart and mind of the immediate observer, if he is able to retain it, warms up the picture which he hands down to the waiting future. M's great achievement well illustrates this.

" Jesus wept!" In the Christian Gospel we have these brief words, poignant and revealing; but there is no chapter or verse which tells us, "Jesus smiled," or "Jesus set the disciples to laughing with his illumined wit." Yet no doubt He did these and similar things, and what would we not now give to read of them from the record of an eye-witness, as, for instance, we read in M's "Gospel" of the young disciples rolling on the floor with laughter as Sri Ramakrishna mimics the apparently devout worshippers in church, sitting with

eyes closed, but actually thinking of the latest fashions, etc., like a row of solemn monkeys perched along the bough of a tree at some sacred shrine, who look to be in deep meditation, but all the time are casting sly glances at the bananas in the pilgrims' hands. Great depths of being can be glimpsed through these small, seemingly trivial words and acts, so difficult to capture in writing, and through these, often more than through the more obvious methods, the true teacher conveys his spirit.

The disciple has in mind a form of gentle teasing which the Swami adopted as a means of breaking down in those close to him, a habit, an idiosyncracy or some other manifestation of ego. Being all composed of love and fun and laughter, this method, as used by the Swami, caused no wound, and for that reason was the more effective. If, however, others in the community joined in the chase, so to speak, he would say, "It is all right for me to do these things, but don't you do them." He knew that into those other voices might creep that subtle tone, *not* "composed of love and fun and laughter," which can pierce beneath the skin of the soul.

Sometimes he would note in one of the household a "guru complex," that is, a desire to instruct another. From then on he would smilingly refer to the would-be instructor as So-and-So's "*Guru Acharya*." Nothing, he taught, indicated unfitness to be a teacher of deeply sacred matters so much as the desire and ambition to be one. He used to say —quoting Sri Ramakrishna — "Everyone wants to be a teacher, but how few there are who are willing to be disciples!" Humble, surrendered, and free of the bane of self —such alone carry God's mandate to guide other souls.

There is an amusing anecdote given regarding the respective duties of teacher and taught: A young man once approached a spiritual Master in his forest retreat, and with the idea of becoming his follower, asked him:

"Sire, what are the duties of a disciple?"

The Master replied: "A disciple must rise very early in the morning, gather wood for the fire, fetch water for the bath, prepare food for his Guru and assist him in all personal ways. Then, of course, he must keep the hermitage spotlessly clean, take care of the shrine, wash and polish all the brass vessels used in the worship; he must . . ." and he went on naming one duty after another, until the young man exclaimed:

"And what, Sire, does the Teacher do?"

"The Teacher instructs the disciple, accepts his service and spends the rest of his time in meditation." The lad hesitated and then said:

"Sire, I've decided that I'd rather be a guru."

In the latter years at Queensberry Street, the setting for many a gathering was in the Sun Parlor, the main part of a whole new top floor, that was added to the building as a memorial to Sister Satya Prana's older sister, who had taken the place in her life of the real mother they both had lost. This parlor was surrounded by windows and commanded a marvelous view of Fenway Park, the Museum of Fine Arts, which bordered it, and some other fine buildings, and in addition, it gave access to the roof where the Swami and the household used to sit on warm evenings, watching the lights of the city, or perhaps the Northern Lights flash across the sky, and from which, on one occasion, the Swami flew a kite.

Reference has been made to Mr. D., who came to the Centre in deep distress of mind, clouded by a depression which the Swami gradually dispelled through his own special magic. The Saga of Queensberry Street would be incomplete without a description of this magic and the way that it worked.

The Swami with his quick perception realized that Mr.

D. must be distracted away from his brooding thoughts and his sense of failure, and that attendance at Services plus the hearing of poems in the evening at the Centre, was not enough. Something more was needed, and that "something more" the Swami supplied in his gay challenge to Mr. D. to strive with him in the making of kites. He told him of his great prowess along that line when he was a little boy in India, and how he and his small friends used to engage in contests, each one striving through clever manipulation to bring down the kite of the other.

Mr. D. accepted the challenge, and at once both — the Swami at the Centre and Mr. D. at his own home — set to work to build a kite that would prove the champion of the skies. Paper; long, slender pieces of wood; string and other accessories, were brought to the Swami's study, and from then on, instead of being found translating Sanskrit, he would be discovered, seated cross-legged on his rug, putting together with exquisite precision the most delicately balanced, finely-wrought kites imaginable. The sticks were whittled down almost but not quite to the breaking-point, the threadlike string was tied strongly but never clumsily, the tail was adjusted to exactly the proper length, until finally the whole production blossomed forth like an exotic flower, a thing of grace and color, and strong to breast the heights!

Naturally this required concentration, and the Swami gave to the task in hand, in true Yogi fashion, his complete and one-pointed attention.

Mr. D., on his side, forgot his worries and his thoughts of gloom in the excitement of kite-making, and after a few days came eagerly to match his handsome and imposing creation with that of the Swami's.

It was decided that the kite-flying should take place at the seashore. So one fine day, the entire household, with

Swami at the wheel, accompanied by the D's in their own car, drove down to Revere Beach, primed for the great event.

The tide was low, the sand wet and tightly packed—just right for kite-flying—and at a given moment, the beauties were set free upon the breezes. As the disciple remembers it, however, Mr. D's kite was out of balance and would not stay up. Perhaps it was a reflection of his own mood! At any rate, the kites, the kite-makers and their various retainers piled into their several cars and returned to Boston with the great question of supremacy still unanswered. But shortly afterwards, at the same place under similar conditions, the battle was resumed, while an ever-increasing audience of beach strollers looked on.

The contest took place over the water, where the Swami proved that skill acquired in childhood is never lost; for he would bring his kite down till it was all but touching the top of the waves and then quickly cause it to soar again into the blue, leaving its rival far behind.

What the ultimate result of the contest was the disciple does not recall, for it continued day after day for a week or more, with each contestant growing more and more eager as new kites were manufactured and took to the air; but its object was surely accomplished, for Mr. D. emerged into a more cheerful, positive frame of mind and was able to go forward into his life with renewed faith and courage.

The flight from the roof of the Centre, a solo flight of the Swami's, has already been mentioned; but there was another occasion, at Miss Sherwood's farm, when the Swami flew a new kite so high that it went out of sight in the clouds. The string was long and it took many minutes to let it out and many more minutes to draw it in, and the kite, when it was finally retrieved, was damp and soggy. All this took place during the lunch hour, but the Swami was so absorbed

in the ascent of his treasure that he could not be persuaded to leave it long enough to eat his food.

Thus, as always, in the playing of the game he was the child, without calculation or pretense; but behind the game and the child stood the compassionate healer, the ever-wise teacher and unfailing friend.

When the need for the kite-making ended, the kites were put away and were not produced again. Benjamin Franklin flew a kite into the air and brought down lightning out of the clouds; the Swami sent his kite aloft, drew down light, and dispelled the clouds of a troubled mind.

TO BE CONTINUED

"I am he, the Self of the universe, dwelling in the hearts of all. I am the Word. I am supreme Brahman.

"I exist as the Self of the Universe, and the whole universe exists in me.

"Mind assumes three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. I am the witness thereof, remaining aloof from all these states, for I am transcendental consciousness.

"The blissful Self am I, experienced by transcending the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the ego. I am Brahman.

"As one sees oneself separate from Brahman, one comes within the domain of maya. Thus does one become subject to birth and death, and passes from one body to another.

"It is man's greatest calamity not to comprehend the divine Self.

"Man struggles to find happiness and to end his misery in this world, but he never attains this goal so long as he remains within the limits of the states of consciousness. . . . By transcending these and going beyond the world of maya, he realizes the Self and attains his goal."

—*Srimad Bhagavatam*

MY MEETING WITH SWAMI VIVIKANANDA

By Susan Elva Dorr

(Miss Dorr was attracted to the Ananda Ashrama by a feature article concerning it, which had appeared in a local newspaper. On learning, after her arrival at the Ashrama Guest House, that, years before, she had met the great Swami Vivekananda, Sister Daya called upon her at a Sunday Service to share the memory of that experience with the congregation. The present article is a transcription of her words on that day.)

I am very glad to tell you about my meeting with Swami Vivekananda. It was long ago, about 1894 I think, that Mrs. Ole Bull, wife of the Norwegian violinist, opened her home to the "Oriental cult," as it was called in those days, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, not far from Harvard College.

One day I slipped away from my home in Boston and sat on a back seat in Mrs. Bull's charming living-room, wanting to see a Swami. I glued my eyes on the door where he would enter; I wanted to see him *walk in*. But he never did walk in, I am sure, for soon I *felt* a Presence, and I turned and looked. There stood this majestic figure in the middle of the room. He was clothed in a soft, pearl-grey robe and turban. At once I had a feeling of being uplifted—*exalted* is the better word.

When the Master began to talk, his voice was soft and musical, like a flowing, rippling brook. I did not understand all he said, but when he spoke of the *power of thought* and said that *the thief steals from himself,* I could interpret that, for I had been brought up on Emerson.

At the close, when I really met the Swami and he touched my hand and smiled such a beatific smile, I felt illumined. In common parlance, I had received a shot in the arm, but it was a shot of Divine Fire.

I never knew how I got home. My body must have gone

alone, for I was not conscious of taking the horse-cars and going anywhere. My conservative but religious family thought me strangely quiet — but I could not tell them.

In two weeks I went again to Mrs. Bull's and had exactly the same experience. After that I went no more, being afraid it might all melt into a dream and become an illusion, as experiences do usually in this world.

REPORT

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

June 21st and July 4th — Swami Paramananda's day of final liberation and the day when Swami Vivekananda laid aside his physical body — were marked as always at the Ananda Ashrama by public and private observance; that is, by specially dedicated Sunday Services and by afternoons of silence and meditation on the actual dates. These Services were not to emphasize the temporary fact of death, but the eternal fact of life and the livingness of the Spirit of man. Especially in the case of Great Souls, there is an unbroken nearness — a light which continues to dispel the seeming darkness, and this was the note that was struck on the two occasions.

On May 23rd, Sister Daya was guest-speaker over Los Angeles Radio Station KFI, on a question-and-answer program sponsored by a local newspaper, "The Independent," which a short time before had carried a front-page article concerning the Ashrama. The Ananda Ashrama and the Vedanta philosophy formed the subject matter for the discussion. The Sister was given only a very few minutes to speak so what she said had to be condensed to the ultimate. From the recording that was made, we give a short extract:

Question: What does the Vedanta philosophy teach?

Sister Daya: It is like putting the theory of relativity into a nut-shell, to give in a few words such a profound philosophy as Vedanta, because, as I think of it, Vedanta is like a back-drop for all religions. It is the same as we find in science — that concept of oneness back of all manifestation; for we believe that there is an eternal Spirit back of all the spirits of men and that they all meet in the Centre. As far as tolerance goes, we want people to have their own faiths, their own beliefs, but we want them to realize that each belief is a path leading to that Centre, and in that way we shall have the real tolerance, the real understanding of everybody's faith. We believe that heaven is not a thing that just comes after death, but through our selflessness, through our service, through our profound grasp of these things we can have realization of our greater nature here and now. That is the spirit of our work.

On June 5th, Sister Daya participated in a Round Table Conference, held in Los Angeles under the auspices of the New Century Foundation, of which Mrs. Althea Turner, the Ashrama's good friend, is Executive Secretary. The subject of the evening was "Baccalaureate of Faiths" and was presented by such diversified speakers as Dr. Hyman Lischner, President of the Foundation; Dr. Alfred T. De Groot, Dean of Chapman College; Rabbi Sonderling of Fairfax Temple, and, of course, Sister Daya, who gave expression to the universal viewpoint of Vedanta. It was an "Open House" evening and there was present a large gathering of interested people. The spirit of the occasion was one of complete unity.

On the evening of August 11th, a fine concert — for the benefit of the Ananda Ashrama at Dacca, Pakistan — was given by the Grimes Trio, (Mrs. Rebecca Grimes, pianist; Miss Alta Grimes, cellist, and Miss Elena Grimes violinist),

assisted by Mr. Karl Damkilde tenor. The program was classical and included numbers by Beethoven, Vivaldi, Handel, Schubert and Cesar Franck. The artists gave a finished performance, worthy of a concert-hall in New York City. Mrs. Grimes and her daughters — especially Miss Alta— have played in the Temple before, always to the delight of those present. Mr. Damkilde, a young Dane recently come to this country, is blessed with a voice of pure and limpid quality. He hopes to make singing his career. The Temple was filled to capacity, and following the concert, many lingered to partake of the light refreshments that were served in the Temple patio.

THE VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASS.

True to its tradition of forty years, the Vedanta Centre remained open throughout an exceptionally hot summer. The rhythm of two Services every Sunday and the Class on Tuesday evening was maintained without interruption. While the absence of some of the faithful members was keenly felt, fresh interest of the newcomers frequently lessened the void. Often during the week there were visitors who on their brief sojourn in Boston paused at the Centre to learn of Vedanta or to partake of its peaceful atmosphere.

The chief centre of interest, however, was Ananda Ashrama, the Peace Retreat in Cohasset, hidden from the world by its surrounding woods. There the Vedanta Centre's Community took its residence for the season, traveling to the city only for the public meetings.

The story of the life at the Ashrama can be better told in terms of souls' unfoldment than in actual events. Each day was quite like another in its plan of worship, work and recreation binding the participants with a bond of deeper fellowship. The solemnity of the daily devotions and philosophic study contrasted with the light-hearted, happy discus-

sions during meals on subjects ranging from automobiles to psychiatry. Many were the guests who came and went, adding their share of profound interest in the spiritual life, enthusiasm and wit. Never did the following poem of Swami Paramananada seem so appropriate as this summer of 1949 in Cohasset:

In solitude's inmost stillness there is a sacred shine.
Divine harmony sings there;
Peace perpetual reigns there;
Pure gladness shines there;
Sweet fragrance permeates the air.
But none can find access there
Whose inner eyes are closed;
Nor can one enter there
Whose footsteps are heavy and hard.

It was sung at the Vesper Service, often to the accompaniment of the song-birds or the music of the wind.

The observance of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Ashrama highlighted all the activities. It attracted a large group of friends, both old and new. First, everyone joined in an hour's silence ending with the reading of the Bhagavatam. The breathless stillness of the hour in the setting of fragrant pines sheltering the worshippers brought to mind the line from the Christian hymn, "Peace that floweth like a river." Afterwards a Hindu dinner was served. Srimati Gayatri Devi suggested that some greetings be offered to the Ashrama on its twentieth birthday. In response, Mr. Raphael Borouchoff, Mr. William Ennis, Mr. Charles Gustafson, Mrs. Louise Day and Mr. Darrell Miya spoke spontaneously their words of appreciation for the Ashrama as well as for its Founder, Swami Paramananda. At the end of the day all gathered in the Nature Sanctuary to take part in the Service, characterized by serenity and peace.